

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today just hours before our 45th President, Donald Trump, will deliver his first State of the Union Address.

Members of Congress and guests will fill this Chamber tonight to hear the President speak about a host of issues impacting America, from economic growth to trade deals and infrastructure investments, to immigration reform. I look forward to hearing the President speak about the administration's successes to date and the plans for the future.

The President and the First Lady, Melania Trump, have invited 15 guests to attend the speech tonight, including veterans, law enforcement officers, first responders, and families who have lost loved ones in the fight against the MS-13 street gang. All the guests in this Chamber tonight, invited by Members of both parties, represent a wide cross section of America, and I know that all have hope that our greatest days truly do lie ahead.

Just weeks ago, the House passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act for the American people to get our economy moving again. In February, Americans will see and are beginning to see, today, more money in their paychecks. We delivered a fairer, simpler, pro-family Tax Code to give more money back to taxpayers and spur economic growth.

As the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is implemented, we are hearing story after story about how this is already making a difference in millions of people's lives across the country. We have already seen positive results, and we look forward to hearing more from President Trump tonight on his vision for a safe, strong, and proud America.

Hundreds of companies across the Nation are sharing the benefit of the GOP tax reform with their workers. They are raising wages, awarding bonuses, and increasing 401(k) matching contributions. I want to highlight just some of the companies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that are investing in their employees:

1st Summit Bank in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, provided a \$1,000 bonus to all full-time employees on top of their 2017 year-end bonuses, raised its salary ranges, and increased its charitable giving budget by 10 percent.

AccuWeather of State College in my Fifth Congressional District provided special year-end bonuses to all employees over and above other compensation benefits and year-end bonuses to which employees may be entitled. Company leaders said: "The bonuses are possible due to the company's robust financial performance in 2017 and strong confidence in the growing U.S. and global economy now that the tax bill has passed."

Fulton Financial in Lancaster raised its base wage to \$12 per hour, awarded bonuses for its 3,700 employees, and is increasing charitable contributions by \$2 million.

Kish Bancorp in Belleville awarded \$500 bonuses to part-time employees, \$1,000 bonuses to full-time employees, is adding \$10 million to capital expenditures over the next 3 years, and will raise their base wage.

This is just a fraction of what is happening in the Commonwealth and in States across the Nation. The benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are just beginning to be seen, and I have great faith that the benefits will just continue to grow for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I know the President will be talking about his record-setting accomplishments in his first year, how the policies of his administration are lifting all Americans and setting a foundation for building a safe, strong, and proud America. From jobs and the economy to his \$1 trillion plan for rebuilding our depleted infrastructure, to important immigration reforms, I know that he will cover a lot of ground tonight and will speak from the heart.

I also hope to hear about our national security, from rebuilding our military to the ongoing efforts to defeat terrorists around the world who try to harm America and Americans.

I know the President's State of the Union Address will resonate with our American values and unite us with patriotism and greater opportunities. I welcome the President tonight to this Chamber, as well as the First Lady and all the guests, and I look forward to hearing his important message for the future of our country.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BISHOP ALEXIS THOMAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Bishop Alexis Thomas, who passed away on January 18, 2018.

Bishop Thomas was many things to many people. He was an inspiring pastor. He was a father, a son, and a brother. He was a dynamic and passionate leader not just at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, but throughout our community in Phoenix. Under his careful stewardship, Pilgrim Rest grew by leaps and bounds.

However, Bishop Thomas' service extended well beyond the church. Bishop Thomas founded the African American Christian Clergy Coalition and co-founded the African American Strategic Alliance Coalition in Phoenix. Thanks to these endeavors and many others, Bishop Thomas will be remembered as a man with a remarkable vision for change who was taken from us way too soon.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to call Bishop Thomas my friend. I can per-

sonally attest that he worked miracles, large and small, every day in Phoenix and in Arizona. He touched more lives than we will ever know. And though we are devastated by his loss, we know that his legacy of service and love will live forever in our community.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO LYLE WELLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to two leaders, one from the First Congressional District of New York, from the North Fork.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Lyle Wells, whose family farm is over 350 years old. Lyle was taken from our community too soon. He was a leader, a former president of the Long Island Farm Bureau, and a one-time member of the Riverhead Town Planning Board.

He positively led and left a great impact and legacy on the next generation of farmers who really do need to be better cultivated to give that opportunity to be able to thrive.

Long Island Farm Bureau Administrative Director Rob Carpenter, talking about Wells' impact and a relationship going back decades, said: "He would take all the time needed to explain a program to anyone who wanted to learn about farming—a legislator, a community member, another farmer. It's a big loss. You just can't replace a Lyle."

It was also observed that everyone would start laughing because of his style of laughter. It was an honor that he graced our community and our town. Him having gone through life in this community made the rest of us better. That was the positive impact of Lyle Wells.

A memorial service will be held for Lyle this Thursday, February 1, beginning at 11 a.m. on the hill at Wells Homestead Acres, located at 185 Phillips Lane in Aquebogue.

We will pray for Lyle's family. We are thinking about Lyle, and he will certainly be looking over what hopefully will be 350 more years of great farming on that family farm.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RABBI ISAIAH ZELDIN

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to pay tribute to Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, who just passed away at the age of 97.

For me, Rabbi Zeldin was Uncle Shy. For the Stephen Wise Temple in Los Angeles, he was their founder, their rabbi, their teacher, and their friend, according to the announcement they posted on their website.

Rabbi Zeldin was born in Brooklyn, New York. His father's picture, Morris, is in my office. Morris Zeldin was a respected scholar and ardent Zionist. Rabbi Zeldin moved to Los Angeles in 1954 to establish the California branch of Hebrew Union College and served as an 11-State regional director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In 1964, he and a nucleus of 35 families founded Stephen Wise Temple on a beautiful 18-acre mountain site situated between the city's two largest Jewish population centers: the West Side and San Fernando Valley.

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It is a beautiful temple. When you are there for a service and hear the great singers and see the sunset out the windows, you know that you are in a very special place. This temple became one of the largest Jewish congregations in the entire world.

Uncle Shy, we miss you. We thank you, and we know that you have impacted tens of thousands of people so positively, and we will honor you, remember you for your legacy and your impact on generations to come.

RECOGNIZING OFELIA RUDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in recognition of Ofelia Ruder, who will be celebrating her 90th birthday this May.

Ofelia Ruder is the executive director of the Cuban Hebrew Congregation, a religious organization in my congressional district that was dedicated to providing a home for Jews coming out of Cuba.

Like me and my family and so many others, Mr. Speaker, Ofelia Ruder was forced to flee Castro's brutal tyranny. In 1960, she arrived in the United States, this great land of opportunity, with her husband and two boys. Soon thereafter, sadly, she lost her husband to cancer and was faced with a challenge of raising her two small children by herself. They both eventually became dedicated civil servants working to improve our south Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, in the 50 years that Ofelia Ruder has served at the synagogue, she has touched the lives of so many and has been a beacon of hope for all those who know her. Her work has earned her many awards and recognitions for her contributions to our country, to the Cuban Hebrew Congregation, and to Israel. I am very thankful for Ofelia Ruder's service.

"Feliz cumpleaños," "happy birthday," Ofelia.

HONORING PALMETTO BAY NATIVE, MIKI EREZ

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Palmetto Bay resident Miki Erez, a constituent of my congressional district who recently competed in the 2018 Fitbit Miami Marathon and Half Marathon.

Miki was injured while serving in the Israeli Air Force during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, where he suffered multiple spinal injuries. Despite three spinal operations over an 18-month period, Miki never let his injuries slow him down.

Miki's experiences led him to create a revolutionary home training system

for wheelchair users called Wheelchair Fitness Solutions. This system, the first of its kind, was designed specifically for disabled individuals.

Miki also participates in a range of activities in south Florida, including wheelchair basketball and swimming, as well as contributing to the spinal cord injury community and veterans associations. Forty years later, his injuries have not prevented him from being an active and inspiring member of our south Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent people like Miki who inspire others each and every day.

Congratulations to Miki Erez.

PROVIDE TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS WITH LIFESAVING TREATMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again urge this House to put right-to-try legislation on the floor and to provide Americans with terminal illnesses potentially lifesaving treatment.

Matt Bellina, my constituent, a 31-year old Navy veteran, husband, father of three, and an ALS warrior who has been a partner in this fight, recently sent me the following message: "In ALS there is only one active phase III trial. The drug is NurOwn, and it looks incredibly promising, but I didn't meet the exclusion criteria, so I am unable to participate in this trial. It looks like the drug has a good shot of making it to market in quarter one of 2020. Unfortunately, there is a good chance that I will be dead by then."

"The right-to-try bill is the only viable option for me at this point. I am begging you and the rest of Congress to get this done. I want to be there to watch my three boys grow up."

Mr. Speaker, we must not delay this lifesaving legislation any longer. I urge House leadership to put this bill on the floor for a vote. Terminally ill patients across this country are depending on us.

RECOGNIZING OLYMPIANS FROM BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional athletes from Bucks County who will be representing our Nation in the 2018 Winter Olympics next month.

Jamie Greubel Poser, from Newtown, Pennsylvania, will represent the United States as a member of the bobsled team.

Ryan Gunderson, from Bensalem, Pennsylvania, will be joining the U.S. Olympic hockey team as a defender.

Brian O'Neill, from Yardley, Pennsylvania, will join the U.S. hockey team as a forward.

Jamie is a veteran of competition at this level, having won a bronze medal at both the 2017 World Championships—also held in South Korea—as well as the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

For Brian O'Neill, this will be his first experience as an Olympic competitor. A standout player at Germantown Academy and Yale University, Brian went on to play for the New Jersey Devils before eventually playing for the Kontinental Hockey League.

Ryan Gunderson, also a first-time Olympic competitor, led Holy Ghost Prep to its first Flyers Cup. He currently plays in the Swedish Hockey League.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Ryan, Jamie, and Brian great success. They will, no doubt, make Bucks County and our entire Nation proud.

DEFENSE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we have an explicit constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense. Yet some of my colleagues would rather use our military as a bargaining chip for political reasons.

For 3 days, our military was held hostage while the government shut down for an unrelated immigration issue. For 3 days, military families across the globe faced fear and uncertainty over whether they would be paid on time. Unfortunately, this is not the last time or the first time our military has been used as a political pawn. Year after year, defense spending is held hostage, causing our readiness to reach a dangerously low level.

In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary Mattis stated: "No enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration."

We are facing a host of threats from every direction; threats that jeopardize our safety, our freedom, and our way of life. North Korea is aggressively pursuing a nuclear arsenal that can target the United States and our allies. China's land reclamation has sparked international clashes. Russian opportunistic aggression is threatening our allies and could trigger a NATO alliance response. Violent extremists are threatening global stability as their evil ideology poisons minds and induces followers to kill innocent people. Iran continues to invoke instability by sponsoring terrorism around the globe.

We expect our military to be able to respond to each of these threats, yet years of budget cuts and continuing resolutions have degraded our military's capabilities and destroyed morale.

Here are the stunning and sobering facts:

Less than half of the Navy's aircraft can fly due to maintenance and spare parts delays.

Of the 58 Army combat brigade teams that our Nation depends on to deploy overseas to defend our freedoms, only five could be called upon to fight tonight.